1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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developed system of terms denoting social status, so in the social organisation of the Andamans there are very few special duties between relatives, and the conduct of persons to one another is chiefly determined by their respective social positions. This will become evident as we proceed, and it will thus be shown that there is a close connection between the way the natives denote relationships and the way in which their social life is affected by questions of relationship.

We have already seen that in the Andamanese social organisation the family is of great importance. A family is constituted by a permanent union between one man and one woman. In one of its aspects this union is a sexual one. By marriage a man acquires the sole right to sexual congress with the woman who becomes his wife. At the same time it is the duty of a married man to avoid sexual relations with other women whether married or unmarried. Promiscuous intercourse between the sexes is the rule before marriage, and no harm is thought of it. The love affairs of the boys and girls are carried on in secret, but the older members of the camp are generally fully aware of all that goes on. What generally happens is that after a time a youth forms an attachment with some girl and a marriage between them results from their love affair.

It is impossible, at the present time, to discover exactly how the Andamanese formerly regarded infidelity on the part of a wife or husband. In the Great Andaman there is great laxity in this matter at the present day. Quarrels sometimes arise when a husband discovers an intrigue between his wife and another man, but very often the husband seems to condone the adultery of his wife. Mr E. H. Man, writing on this subject, says that "conjugal fidelity till death is not the exception, but the rule," and adds, "It is undoubtedly true that breaches of morality have occasionally taken place among a few of the married persons who have resided for any length of time at Port Blair, but this is only what might be expected from constant association with the Indian convict attendants at the various homes; justice, however, demands that in judging of their moral characteristics we should consider only those who have been

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uninfluenced by the vices or virtues of alien races[1]." At the present time conjugal infidelity is very common and is lightly regarded. It is almost certain that the establishment of the Penal Settlement amongst them has affected their morals in this particular, but there does not seem to be any very satisfactory evidence that their former morality was quite so strict as Mr Man would have us believe. One piece of evidence in this matter is that the spread of syphilis, when it was first introduced amongst them seems to have been very rapid, and yet this was before many of the tribes had been very seriously affected by the Settlement.

Besides the special sexual relation between a husband and wife there is a special economic relation, if we may speak of it as such. The two share one hut between them, or one portion of a communal hut. It is the duty of the wife to provide the fire-wood and the water for cooking and drinking, and to cook the meals at the family fire. It is the duty of the husband to provide flesh food for himself and for his wife, while it is her duty to provide and prepare vegetable food.

A marriage is not regarded as fully consummated until the birth of a child. Mr Man states that the survivor of a childless couple is not looked upon as the chief mourner. A father who has been away from home greets his wife first on his return and then greets his other relatives; but if no child has been born to him a husband first greets his blood-relatives (father, mother, brothers, etc.) and only after that does he visit his wife.

The only regulation of marriage is on the basis of relationship. Marriage is forbidden between near *consanguinei*. The exact rules, in this matter, if indeed there be any exact rules, are difficult to discover. It is quite clear that a man would not be permitted to marry his sister or half-sister, nor his father's or mother's sister, nor his brother's or sister's daughter. The question is more difficult when it comes to the matter of cousins. In 1908 I only found one pair of first cousins who were married to one another, this being in the *Aka-Bo* tribe. The husband

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 135. He speaks of the wives as "models of constancy."

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

he is permitted to marry:[1] although many remain single until they have undergone these various rites, it is considered almost as binding on those who marry before doing so, to comply with these time-honoured usages at some early opportunity.

Marriage.—1. It has been asserted that the "communal marriage,"[2] system prevails among them, and that "marriage is nothing more than taking a female slave,"[3] but so far from the contract being regarded as a merely temporary arrangement, to be set aside at the will of either party, no incompatibility of temper or other cause is allowed to dissolve the union, and, while bigamy, polygamy, polyandry, and divorce are unknown, conjugal fidelity till death is not the exception, but the rule, and matrimonial differences, which, however, occur but rarely, are easily settled with or without the intervention of friends.

2. It is undoubtedly true that breaches of morality have occasionally taken place among a few of the married persons who have resided for any length of time at Port Blair, but this is only what might be expected from constant association with the Indian convict attendants at the various homes; justice, however, demands that in judging of their moral characteristics we should consider those only who have been uninfluenced by the vices or virtues of alien races.

3. As in various other savage tribes, unchastity[4] is apparently universal among the unmarried of both sexes, and is indeed so entirely disregarded that no reproof is administered, even by the nearest relatives, to those who offend in this manner; notwithstanding this laxity, the girls are strikingly modest and child-like in their demeanour, and when married are good wives and models of constancy, while their husbands do not fall far short of them in this respect. It should, however, be mentioned, that the freedom which exists between the sexes prior to wedlock, is confined to those who are not within the prescribed limits of affinity, as their customs do not permit of the union of any who are known to be even distantly related;[5] the fact of our allowing first cousins to marry seems to them highly objection-

[1] They think highly of a man who defers marriage until he is of full age, and the reverse of a youngster who rushes into matrimony before attaining the mature (!) age of eighteen.

[2] "So absolutely closely allied are the Andaman Islanders in their moral as well as physical life to the lower animals, that it is said by an eminent scientific voyager (Sir Edward Belcher) that the man and woman remain together until the mother ceases to suckle the child, after which they separate as a matter of course, and each seeks a new partner" (Brown).

[3] *Vide* Wood.

[4] "A great many races of mankind are quite indifferent to juvenile unchastity, and only impose strict conduct on their women after marriage" (Peschel).

[5] "It is precisely nations in the most primitive stage which have the greatest abhorrence of incestuous marriages". (Peschel).